Purkal Youth Development Society

Why does so much passion drive this society?

Are we a mere school?

What did we do last year and why did we do it?

Underprivileged rural children:
Who will help if we did not?

ANNUAL REPORT
2017-2018

Who are we?

When our founder, G. K. Swamy, noticed that underprivileged children in his rural community stood no chance of gaining employment next to their wealthier peers, he decided to do something about it.

He began an after-school tutoring program to supplement the education of four local children. Cattle sheds and garages were our gilded halls of learning, in the beginning.

The movement grew wings when, with the admirable support of many friends of the society, in the year 2008, the Society established a fully-equipped school.

Today, we provide mentorship, healthcare, nutrition, and schooling of the highest order to children who would otherwise never have gotten it.

Are we a mere school?

Children must be allowed to live free; to satisfy their natural curiosity and their innate hunger for knowledge of the wide world before them.

We believe that education is incomplete if it is boiled down to a classroom, a few books, and a teacher. Sitting in a classroom, with an empty belly, dreading the return home to financial and familial turmoil, we cannot expect any child to do justice to his potential.

To bring out the true brilliance in a child, we provide a home away from home; we provide the resources they will need to pursue their passions without fear; we fill in the void underprivileged children feel due to the staggering deficiencies they experience at home.

This includes providing figures that can act in a parental capacity - providing the guidance and exposure that parents would provide in a traditional home.

Travel, and truly coming to terms with the world around them, is an important component of the education we provide our children.

'Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education in the elder, a part of experience'

- Francis Bacon

The notion that education ends once the academic year ends is an antiquated one. Our commitment towards our children has no expiry date. We remain open for around 260 days each year, for 6 days a week, and 10 hours a day. Even Sundays we strive to fill with activities that engage the mind, strengthen the body and sharpen the intellect.

The children under our care often have to return to dark and dingy homes, often to turbulent households, and often to homes that simply cannot provide an environment conducive to learning. We provide hostels where each and every child is mentored on an individual basis; the development of productive lifestyles is ensured thusly.

An important part of a child's development lies in nutrition. Empty bellies rarely make for ready minds - and so, we provide breakfast, lunch, fruits, an evening snack, and dinner.

Healthcare is also an area where we do not hesitate to go to great lengths for our children. We guarantee medical attention to all our children. We have, on several occasions, stepped up to momentous needs and met them in spite of staggering financial costs.

We care for children from early childhood till they are fruitfully employed. Our philosophy is an unwavering one of no child left behind.

Why does so much passion drive this society?

Over the years, many hands have played a part in building PYDS - people of many colours, nationalities, financial standings, diverse skillsets, and views. Ultimately, what drives all of them together can only be a vision so strong enough, a commitment to an ethos so compelling, that it enables them to overcome their differences and work towards the common goal.

The common goal we share is the refashioning of the state of Uttarakhand. When we educate, we do not educate with the goal of providing fuel for the job market; we educate with the goal of creating change agents who will return to their villages and become the footfalls that begin an avalanche of development.

Nearly 70% of the population of Uttarakhand lives in rural areas. To reverse the backwardness in many of these communities and bring about lasting change is no mean task. We believe that this can be done only by sending ambassadors of change to as many communities as possible.

Our students, equipped with the kind of exposure and skillsets that no other school would provide them, are capable of becoming the change that we want to see in their communities, in the state, and eventually, in the nation.

This vision, and it's root in the common good, drives this society more than any other goal.

Underprivileged Rural Youth: Who will help if we did not?

According to the Annual Status of Education Report 2017, a staggering 42.6% of rural youth in the age group 14-18 cannot tell time using a clock; 49.3% of the youth of that same age group cannot do division.

These students left school unequipped to be productive members of society, and have great difficulties finding employment. The state has opened scores of government schools, but the majority of them neither provide the quality of education that can bring about change nor have the commitment towards seeing that change.

The alternative, private schools, often have exorbitant fees with only the elite being able to afford them. The common man has no hope of giving his children such an education.

We can't, in any realistic sense, hope to save each and every child; but we can bring about a change in the lives of those whom we reach. This change has the beautiful, compelling power of being contagious. It spreads. And we do have the hope that this change will spread.

To the ends of the earth, for our children...

We pride ourselves on being prepared to go to any lengths to ensure the wellbeing and success of our students. The protection and patronage of the school extend far beyond the confines of the campus, both in spirit and in the physical sense.

A significant number of our students, being from less-than-ideal households, have experienced emotional trauma. Trauma creates changes you don't choose; healing is about creating changes that you do choose. We allow them space and all the resources they will need to find themselves by providing counselors and an environment conducive to healing.

Oftentimes, the circumstances at children's homes are much too unpleasant for them to devote their undivided focus towards their learning. In such cases, we reach into their homes and try to remedy the situation as best as we can. This sometimes comes to providing lights or desks for studying, or to supplanting their homes by removing them to our hostel.

Many of the children that reach us are often ill-equipped to compete with their peers due to the drastic differences in the quality of education they have previously received. In such cases, we provide remedial classes to properly reintegrate them into the classes children of their respective ages would ideally be in.

Additionally, remedial classes are also available for children who may have minor difficulties in their coursework. This is done in a non-intrusive manner by filling in the gaps that may exist in their knowledge so that they can build on that, as opposed to segregating them from their friends.

We strive to keep standards at our school at its peak. In pursuing this goal, the school is a participant of the International Benchmark Test, a program that allows schools to compare student performance internationally, developed by the Australian Council for Education Research.

Each and every child that goes through our halls of learning will have every opportunity at having a successful professional career post-academia. We profile each student, provide information regarding career choices and facilitate scholarships for higher studies. Deserving students also participate in exchange programs and summer programs to distinguished institutes abroad.

Comprehensive healthcare means what?

Our children come to us having been through extremely adverse circumstances. The development of healthy habits, hygiene, and self-awareness is often neglected when mere survival is the primary concern in life. Oftentimes, we have to start from the very fundamentals of hygiene - teaching children how to brush, instilling the habit of clipping their nails, and sometimes even teaching them how to use the toilet.

Beyond this, we maintain detailed records on each and every child - ensuring that they receive vaccinations and complete physicals. This allows us to both identify diseases at an early stage, and get the requisite health care to the child.

If and when we identify a medical condition that needs great care, we are prepared to go to any lengths, as a parent would have been, to help the child - if not for us, many parents would have resorted to quacks and charlatans which only further complicates the condition.

Without health life is not life it is only a state of langour and suffering - an image of death.

- The Buddha

Mahi Pundir, the daughter of a farmer, suffered third and fourth degree burns to 55% of her body. Her condition was serious enough that several doctors despaired of her life. Her family could never hope to cover the staggering costs involved in treating her and the skin grafts she would need.

The Society was able to step up to her needs in her darkest hour and succeded in securing her treatment. And with the skill and magnanimity of her surgeon, Dr. Yogi, she has made a near-complete recovery, now. She can be seen romping around the school, battling not with life-threatening injuries, but with her coursework, friendships, and growing up.

Anita Shah would experience attacks of severe pain near the spinal area. It proved incredibly hard to diagnose Anita's condition. Over the course of two months, she would see a range of specialists in a variety of medical fields.

As a last resort, the Society arranged for her to see a neurophysician - who suggested that she be taken in for an MRI scan. The diagnostic test in itself proved to be expensive; but the shocking fact that Anita suffered from a case of Pott's disease, or spinal tuberculosis, came to light in the MRI scan result.

Pott's disease, if left untreated, can lead to severe curvature of the spine and eventual paralysis of the legs.

However, Anita's story had a happy ending as the society managed to secure her treatment, and she has since made a full recovery

Akash Pal, the son of a manual labourer, had a lot of difficulties keeping up with his peers in class. He'd frequently complain of being unable to see what was written on the board.

A little examination revealed that a growth in one of his eyes hindered proper vision - this would, if left untreated, result in the loss of vision.

The Society raised money for the surgery that would be needed to remove the growth. In a dramatic show of hands by destiny, Akash began to show exceptional gifts in the visual arts. One of his paintings were selected for *Aaghaz-e-Dosti*, an initiative for the betterment of Indo-Pakistani relations. He continues to experiment with his talents as he grows.

Sheetal Pundir, a student from an extremely impoverished home, was quite good at academics. Whilst studying at the School, she had to be admitted to a nursing home to have an appendectomy. Due to complications post-surgery, she developed a severe case of septicemia. Her situation worsened as the days passed, and over the course of a few harrowing months, she would have 3 more surgical procedures.

The Society is proud to have stuck by her even in her darkest moments. Today, Sheetal is a Junior Librarian at the School.

Total nutrition means what?

The importance of nutrition cannot be overstated: despite the staggering economic growth India has been experiencing since Independence, the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau finds that the offspring of rural India eat less than they did 40 years ago.

Children below the age of three are consuming, on an average, 80 ml of milk per day instead of the 300 ml they require. These data explain, in part, why in the same survey, 35% of rural men and women were found to be undernourished, and 42% of children were underweight.

The Swamys, in the early days, provided bread, jam, and nuts as an evening snack to the handful of students under their wing. As time took flight, and the number of students grew, the logical progression was a full meal: rice and dal; and then, a breakfast was added to the provisions. This was promptly followed by a fruit, snack, and finally, dinner.

What does holistic education imply?

At PYDS, education is a response to the wholeness of a child; we strive to raise a forest & not a culture in a petri dish of academic silos.

Growth is at once intellectual, somatic, visceral, interpersonal, emotional & spiritual. Intellectual growth is not merely a cumulation of facts & procedures but a humane reflection, curiosity & investigation of phenomena. Nurtured from a very young age, this guarantees the necessary goodness which is the promise of education.

"Teach your children how to think for themselves, how to evaluate evidence, and how to disagree with you."

– Richard Dawkins

The emotional growth of the student is of utmost importance to the educator. Only when one is of a sound mind can the fruits of the mind be virtuous. It is not unnatural that the world which, once, leaned entirely on IQ now recognizes the greater worth of EQ. A lot of factors play into the emotional development of a child & the environment at PYDS is continually tuned by a team of caregivers to be conducive for good emotional health.

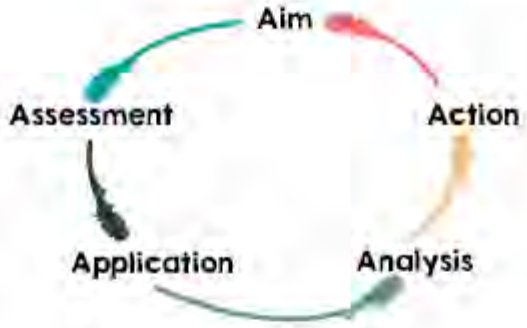
An unsound body is often the ruin of a promising mind. With a strong emphasis on Yoga, sports & physical education, PYDS is clear on the value placed on the physical well-being of the student.

Spirituality can mean something entirely different to each person. However, there are elements of spirituality we may all explore regardless of faith. There are valuable lessons to be gleaned from the triumphs and failures of the many founders and sacred texts of the religions of the world. We try to teach the exploration, the questioning, and evaluation of ideas on their own merit - for dogma does not have a place in a healthy mind.

Our approach to teaching.

Recognizing that traditional modes of teaching are inadequate to support a 21st-century child, we have adopted the **XSEED** program that builds thinking skills and problem-solving confidence in children

XSEED teachers differ in that they have a scientific approach to learning that has been proven to provide radical improvements in the effectiveness of the learning process.



The 5-step teaching method we employ.

A class begins by clearly stating the learning goal, asking children what they know already, demonstrating an experiment or conducting a group activity, letting children speak before they do, ensuring the "application questions" are done independently, fiercely believing in practice, assessing daily, and nurturing each child's individuality.

What do our fruits look like?

Our students leave the School having been through a truly exemplary model of schooling. A vibrant academia, reliable support networks, total nutrition, and our model of holistic education indubitably leave lasting impressions in the hearts and minds of our students. Some of our students have held their own in truly international avenues amongst the most privileged of their peers - armed with, not only top-tier education but also life-skills and those qualities that are the pride and standard of self-made men and women.

In the end, what each and every one of our students represent is the capacity for immense change that would otherwise have been passed over - the capacity for change to their selves, their families, their communities, and their nation. And over the years, we have observed lasting change with immense pleasure - the change experienced by the student and the change that the students can bring to those around him.

"We will remain open to the needs of the future. The changing world will make new and different demands of us, and we shall be ready to respond. Technology, environmental needs and the nature of the needs of the community will all change with time; and the agents of change, which is what our children are, will need to prepare differently. The processes at School, the teachers who mentor our children, and the infrastructure, will all respond to these needs."

- G. K. Swamy, Founder & Secretary

WHAT DID WE
DO LAST YEAR ?

Most of our children, whilst at their homes, are under a variety of familial obligations. And their homes are often ill-lit, noisy, and, at times, turbulent. Such circumstances necessitate the provision of a boarding facility for any serious study to take place. At present, the campus accommodates Senior Secondary students, participants of the Navjeevan Program, and a few exceptional cases.

In pursuit of the vision to open up the hostel to all students of Classes 6 and above who may avail it, the Society has the monumental task of raising 2.3 cr for the purchase of 2.98 ac of land in Rikholi village.

The new building, housing the administrative office, the principal's office, the yoga rooms, art room, the nurse's office, the higher secondary classrooms, the kitchens and the dining hall has been inaugurated and is being fully utilized for the benefit of the students.

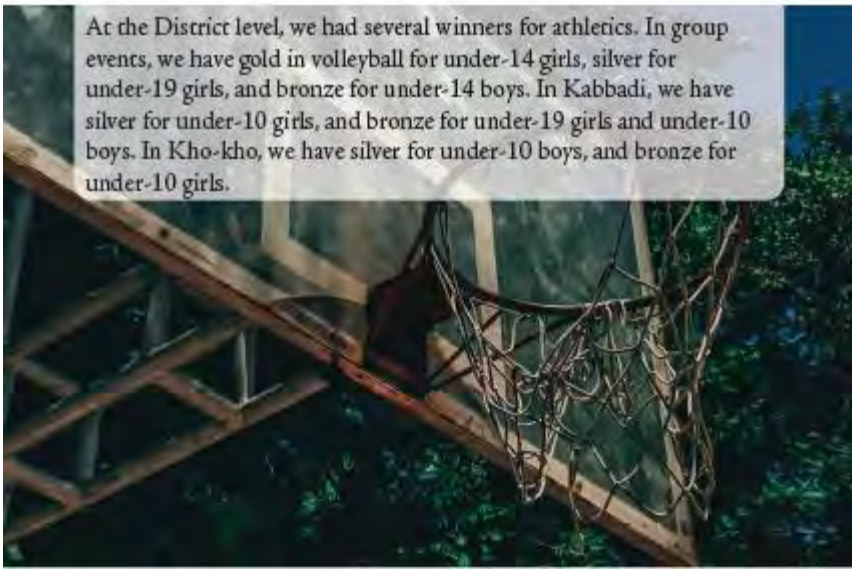
The construction of the fourth floor is in progress; upon the completion of which, a 40 kW solar power plant will be integrated into the structure to make the school as resource efficient as possible.

STEM, at PYDS, is our re-commitment to learning in a holistic manner, to a mindset change that makes learning vital to the student & consciously prepares the student for the uncertain economy of the 21st Century.

Yes, we don't know what the market has in store for our students when they leave our aegis but we do know that we would have prepared them to take on uncertainty with an agile & nimble mind. It is this approach that had students research & ponder over the properties of plants, trees & bark when they stood by their project which was a model on Phytoremediation of Industrial Waste at the National Level Science Exhibition in Delhi.

It is this commitment that helped us secure the necessary support & grant funds from Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog for setting up an **Atal Tinkering Lab**. We have also taken our commitment further by making significant investments in teacher professional development - Aavishkar workshop in Palampur, Jodogyan workshop - have paved the way towards the continued success of our children by ensuring that their teachers are renewed in their passion for looking at this world through a variety of lenses.

The year proved to be a fruitful one for sports. At the *State Level Khel Mahakumbh*, **Shivani Singh** won gold in Badminton; in kho-kho, we have **Khushi Thapli**, **Tapsya**, and **Anshika** with gold; and **Rudrash**, **Anuj**, **Anmol**, and **Atul** with bronze.



At the District level, we had several winners for athletics. In group events, we have gold in volleyball for under-14 girls, silver for under-19 girls, and bronze for under-14 boys. In Kabbadi, we have silver for under-10 girls, and bronze for under-19 girls and under-10 boys. In Kho-kho, we have silver for under-10 boys, and bronze for under-10 girls.

OUR CHAMPIONS

An unflinching focus on the creative, as well as the intellectual, has brought many accolades to the School this past year. **Akash Pal's** painting for the **Indo-Pak Peace Calendar 2018** by **Aaghaz-e-Dosti** being selected brought great joy to us.

Out of 15,300 entries, **Gaurav Singh's** painting cracked the top 50 at the **8th National Water Conservation Painting Competition. Ifra Naaz, Riya Kumari, Aishwarya, Khushi Rawat, & Sapna Maurya** stood first in Category A at the **Best Out of Waste Competition.**

At the **Ramkrishna Mission Painting Competition**, **Vikas Pal** stood third in Category C. **Khula Aasman**, an art platform for creative children would also select **Ifra Naaz**'s painting for its ability to capture subtle emotions as is the way of good art. PYDS continues to emphasize the importance of the creative by nurturing a vibrant Artistic community encompassing painting, sketching, pottery, artisanry, and craftsmanship.

Navjeevan is an ambitious effort of the Society to educate a selection of children with no prior schooling - and who are well past the age for enrollment in the conventional schooling system. A combination of innovative teaching methods and an unusual approach to the very notion of education shows great promise.

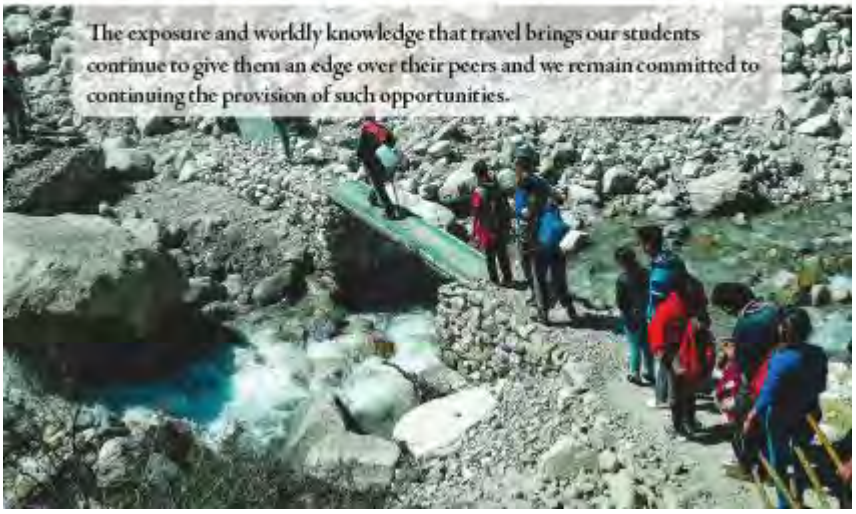
The students enrolled in the program arrive at the school having traveled great distances, and most of the students have improved beyond all recognition.

Vocational Education

Not all students are academically inclined and not all students will benefit from continuing in academia. We instituted the Vocational education program for the benefit of such students.

Students enrolled in the Vocational education program will have careful guidance as well as the resources required for them to find a vocation in life.

At PYDS, travel is as important a component of education that is holistic as any. This academic year saw our students embark on journeys to Uttarkashi, Delhi, Himachal, and Chandigarh. Educational tours were also taken to the **Forest Research Institute**, the **Indian Institute of Remote Sensing**, and the **Nehru Institute of Mountaineering**.



The exposure and worldly knowledge that travel brings our students continue to give them an edge over their peers and we remain committed to continuing the provision of such opportunities.

I was one among the students selected to go to the US as an exchange student as a participant in the AFS intercultural programs. I did a year of high school in Chicago, IL. As a representative of my people, I had the opportunity to present Indian culture and history from an Indian perspective.

I participated in a variety of events hosted by the AFS - a very vibrant academia proved to be one of the highlights of my time in the US. I joined the ecology, German, drama, MUN clubs. I was among the two winners of an essay writing competition, who had the opportunity to go to Disneyland Florida - another highlight.

It doesn't really end there - I took creative writing, participated in a poetry slam, took part in all the high school dances, and had a wonderful experience.

Shalini Sharma

The Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study Program, a full scholarship student exchange program, picked me with a little more than a hundred other students to spend a year in the US. I stayed a year in Vermont, attended classes at the Lamoille Union High School.

The opportunity to truly branch out was the greatest part of my experience in the US. Within a year, I had participated in the School Fall Play, became a part of the Junior Varsity dance team, the Junior Varsity lacrosse team - and won twice, too. I spent some time learning Spanish and French, won Excellence Awards in US History (Advanced), Dance, French, American Studies (Advanced), and Physical Education. I went to the Vermont State House for the first time and met the senators and the Lieutenant Governor General of the state of Vermont. I even did Zumba for the first time!

Kajal Arya

The **Resource Alliance** has been presenting the NGO Awards in Thailand, India, and Vietnam for 10 years with the continued support of the **Rockefeller Foundation.**

The awards honour efforts from all sectors that work toward creating positive, lasting change in the Asia Pacific region. Competitors include NGOs, CSR, individual philanthropy, social enterprise, fundraising, volunteerism, and others.

The Society became the proud recipient of the **Social Impact Award**, competing with over 30 countries.

Our tenth results..

Amandeep Singh
92%

Akash Pal
91%

Prashant Kukreti
91%

Vanshika Dhyani
88%

Aditya Thapli
87%

Twelfth results

Anurag Rawat	88%
Deepak Mourya	87%
Devesh Rawat	87%
Akash Pokhriyal	86.2%

On to life...

We go to extraordinary lengths to ensure the security, well-being, and future of our children. At the end of every academic year, the Society prepares detailed profiles on 12th passouts after extensive deliberations with the student regarding his interests and ambitions; after this, the profiles are used to secure a position in a higher studies course for our children and the financial aid required for them to pursue a course.

Unnati Saklani
Ashoka University

Parul Bhatt
Ashoka University

Khurshida Bano
Himalayan University

... and 14 of our students have been aided in finding and securing a seat in a higher studies course.

Securing the campus...

The campus perimeter has been completely fenced to ensure the safety of the students from external threats, man, and beast alike.

The school campus, school buses, and the office buildings have been enabled with CCTV surveillance.

An RFID kiosk has been set-up at the school gate to register the coming and leaving of employees.

Security guards have been stationed at the school gates for 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

1.17 OUR OPERATIONAL RESERVES WILL LAST US 14 MONTHS.

₹75K WE SPEND APPROX. INR 75,000 ANNUALLY ON EACH CHILD.

16:9 WE PROACTIVELY MAINTAIN A GIRLS-TO-BOYS RATIO OF 16:9.

512 WE HAVE 512 BENEFICIARIES IN OUR CARE.

Our expenses for '17-'18

21% OUR FIXED ASSETS HAVE GROWN BY 21% IN THIS PAST YEAR.

5% SINCE 2013, OUR INDIRECT EXPENSE RATIO HAS FALLEN BY 5%.

2013 — CBSE Affiliation up to 10th, Teacher Training, an Infirmary, On to Life, a Baking Club, an astronomical Telescope

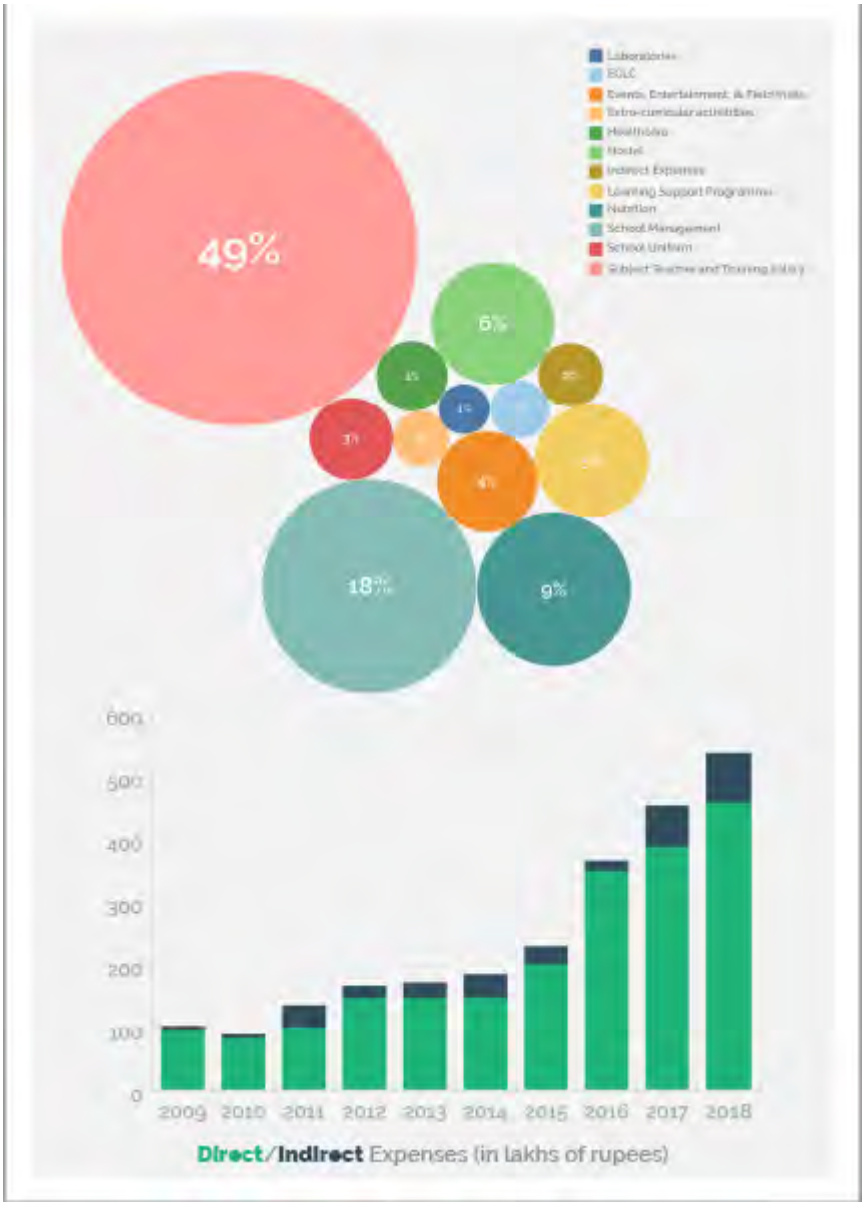
2014 — CBSE Affiliation up to 12th, Pottery, Face to Faith, MUN, rudiments of a hostel, YES Centre

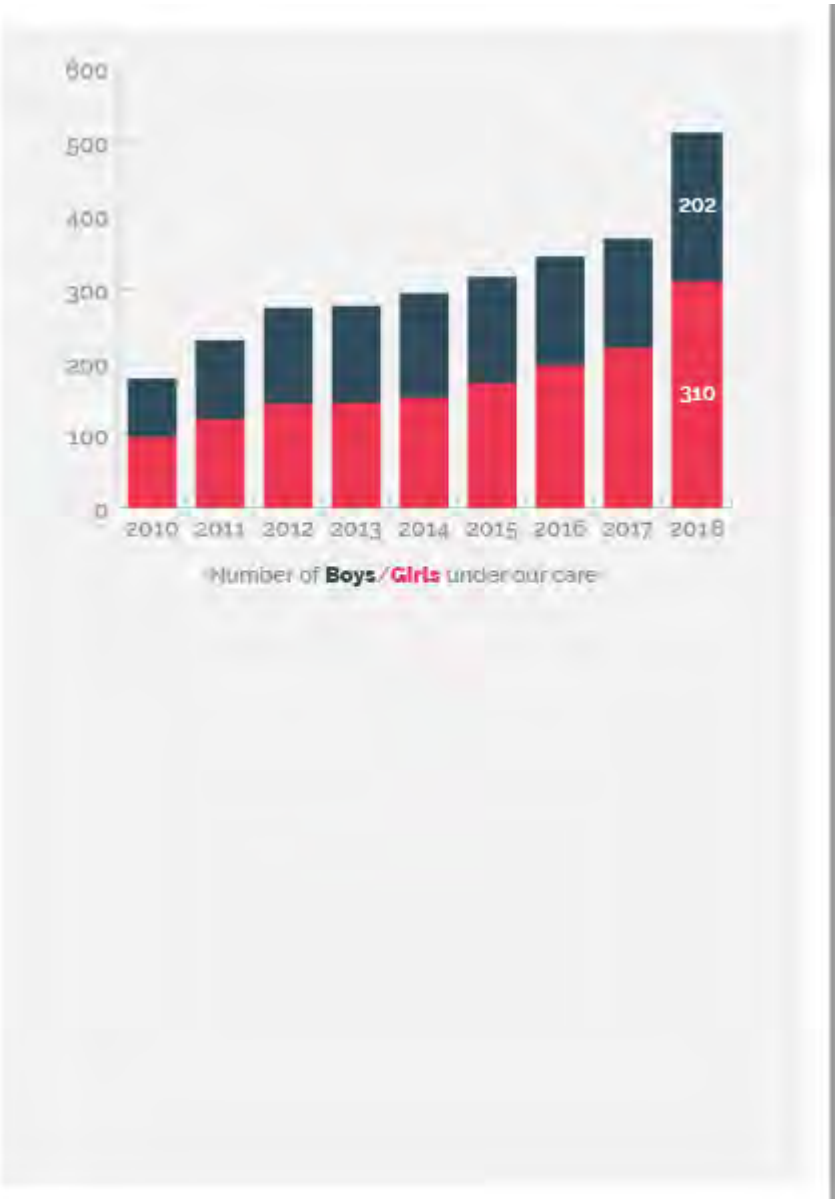
2015 — E-Lab, Waste Management Programs, Olympiads

2016 — Construction begins on a hostel, Summer Trips instituted, Self-defense classes, improved labs, chappati-making machine

2017 — A fully-equipped hostel, the Toastmasters Club, ACER research, Remedial Classes, Counselling

2018 — STEM Program, Navjeevan Project, Vocational Education, New Building, Art Room, Yoga Hall, Milk


Laboratories
BOLC
Events, Entertainment, & Fieldtrials
Extra-curricular activities
Healthcare
Hostel
Indirect Expenses
Learning Support Programme
Nutrition
School Management
School Uniform
Subject Teacher and Training (SBIT)
49%
6%
1%
1%
3%
4%
18%
9%
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
Direct/Indirect Expenses (in lakhs of rupees)


600
500
400
300
200
100
0
202
310
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
Number of Boys/Girls under our care